

## Thomas Hart Benton to Andrew Jackson, January 30, 1812, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### THOMAS H. BENTON TO JACKSON.

Nashville, January 30, 1812.

*Dr. Sir*, I had expected to have seen you at this place; not having the pleasure to do so, I have taken the liberty to trouble you with this letter. In the event that a volunteer force should be raised, there is no question, I fancy, but that you will command the division which goes from this state; and as I have always been resolved to quit the gown for the sword, whenever the sword was to be used, I mean, on some terms or other, to be in that corps. I can and will raise a company from my own county; but a more eligible situation would be that of Aid to the General. Now the truth is, I know of nothing that could recommend me to such a place; but the natural inclination which all young men feel, or ought to feel, to advance themselves in the world, has induced me to say to you, that if you should lack an officer of this kind, and should be able to find none better than myself, that I should deem myself honored by your approbation. I beg you not to answer this application, or to take any other notice of it than merely to remember that if you should think proper to use me, I am entirely at your service.

As soon as the bill for raising volunteers has passed, and we have learnt its details, I shall do myself the pleasure to come and see you, that I may get your advice and instructions about raising and organising as many as possible of them. For I do not content myself with raising a single company: I wish to bring out the largest possible force from this state: and for that purpose I mean to exert myself throughout the sphere of my influence. I have

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a strong hope that a regiment may be raised from the southern counties in which I have practised; and if it is not done, it shall not be for the want of my exertions.

If there should be an expedition to the Canada's I shall make an experiment of my capacity to use the pen as well as the sword. I mean to preserve a journal of the operations of the army; and to give a history of such transactions as are worthy of being remembered. You Sir, who feel a generous wish to see young men come forward by their own intrinsic strength, will not smile at this presumption. You recognize the principle that to mount the eminence of distinction, the votary for fame must dare every thing. I deem it more honorable to fail in honorable efforts than to make no attempt at all to drag myself from obscurity. I think with Tacitus, that every man should aim at doing something worthy of being written, or at writing something worthy of being done.

Respectfully etc.